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FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3543

INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE

RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE

RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 000117

SIPDIS

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EAP FOR DAS JOHN AND OLG

EAP/MLS FOR RAPSON

NSC FOR WILDER

USUN FOR PHEE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/05/2027

TAGS: PREL PHUM UNSC BM CH

SUBJECT: PRC/BURMA: MESSAGE ON UNSC RESOLUTION DELIVERED;
BEIJING STILL OPPOSED

REF: A. STATE 1060

1B. 2006 BEIJING 24497

1C. 2006 BEIJING 24800

Classified By: CDA David S. Sedney. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

11. (C) The PRC is prepared to block a UN Security Council resolution on Burma but appears confident there will not be enough support to bring such a resolution to a vote, according to MFA IO Department UN Division Deputy Director Cong Jun. MFA Director General for International Organizations told CDA that China agrees with many of the U.S. points about the bad behavior of the Burmese regime, commenting that he and other MFA officials had raised PRC concerns with the Burmese Ambassador in Beijing. Wu claimed that Beijing has also pushed ASEAN countries to take a stronger stance toward Burma and expressed a desire for better cooperation with the United States. China does not believe that a UNSCR will be effective and worries that it could open the door to further resolutions that will lead to a deterioration of the situation in Burma, he stressed. MFA IO Department UN Division Deputy Director Cong Jun later told us that Beijing remains strongly opposed to a Burma resolution and, noting previous discussions about the possible use of the PRC veto, said China "will not permit passage of the resolution." Commenting that vote-counting is best done in New York, Cong expressed confidence that fewer than nine countries would be willing to vote in favor of the resolution. End Summary.

DG Wu's Views

12. (C) CDA raised Ref A message with MFA IO Department Director General Wu Hailong January 5. Commenting that China is aware of the U.S. desire for a Burma resolution, Wu said Beijing continues to believe the current situation does not warrant a UNSC resolution. He said that China shares many U.S. complaints about the Burmese regime and noted that he has personally met with the Burmese Ambassador in Beijing to raise PRC concerns. Following his ref B conversation with CDA, Wu said that he had asked his Asian Affairs Department colleagues to call in the Burmese Ambassador to stress the need for progress in addressing internal problems.

13. (C) Despite concern about the problems in Burma, Wu said China believes that a resolution would not be effective. The

first resolution might be largely symbolic, but it would open the door to another resolution and then another, eventually leading to a call for sanctions, according to Wu. He said the PRC believes this would exacerbate the situation, with serious consequences for China as Burma's neighbor.

¶4. (C) Agreeing that the situation in Burma is getting worse, CDA stressed the need for the international community to send a strong signal. Though we would like China to support a resolution as the best way to make the regime realize that it must change course, the CDA emphasized our desire that Beijing not block a resolution.

Working Level Response

¶5. (C) Poloff delivered Ref A message January 5 to MFA International Organizations Department UN Affairs Division Deputy Director Cong Jun, who reiterated ref C points that China recognizes that there are serious problems in Burma and is dissatisfied with the Burmese regime. These very real problems are internal and "do not at this time" constitute a threat to international peace and security requiring a Security Council Resolution, he argued, stating that China "strongly opposes" a resolution. Pointing to December discussions in New York and Beijing, Cong said that the United States should understand that China rarely uses such strong language on UNSC matters. He said that China's position has not changed and "we will not permit passage of the resolution."

¶6. (C) China understands the importance of cooperation with the United States, particularly on the Security Council, according to Cong. Arguing that the PRC took into account

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U.S. concerns on issues such as North Korea, Iran and Sudan, Cong said Beijing believes that the United States should respect China's concerns on Burma. The PRC view is that a UNSC Resolution would be counterproductive because it would lead to a Burmese regime reaction that would worsen the situation, according to Cong. Acknowledging that the United States has a different view, Cong argued that China has more at stake because it shares a long border with Burma and will be the first to suffer if the situation deteriorates. Insisting that none of Burma's neighbors support a resolution, Cong argued that the United States should avoid pushing for a vote that would "spoil the atmosphere for bilateral cooperation at the UNSC."

¶7. (C) Many other countries, including a UNSC members, share Beijing's view that the situation in Burma, "though bad," does not constitute a threat to international peace, claimed Cong. He further insisted that ASEAN countries do not support a UNSC Resolution and expressed confidence that Indonesia will abstain on a draft resolution. Commenting that counting votes is best done in New York, Cong claimed that African and Latin American non-permanent members will be reluctant to vote in favor of the resolution. Escorting Poloff out of the MFA after the meeting, Cong said Beijing's current assessment is that it will not need to "block" a resolution because there will not be enough support to bring it to a vote.

Threat Serious, UNSC Must Take Action

¶8. (C) Drawing from reftel, Poloff rejected Cong's arguments, stressing the deteriorating situation in Burma requires UNSC action. Noting UNSYG Gambari's desire for a strong signal of support, Poloff stressed that failure to act now will send the wrong signal to the Burmese junta. Responding to Cong's repeated call for "greater patience," Poloff pointed out the Beijing's patience to date has failed to halt the downward slide in Burma. Noting U.S. desire to work with China on Burma, Poloff cautioned against blocking the resolution.

SEDNEY